



Ministry  
of Defence

Defence Statistics (Health)  
Ministry of Defence  
Oak 0 West (#6028)  
Abbey Wood North  
Bristol BS34 8JH  
United Kingdom

Telephone [MOD]: +44 (0)30679 84423  
Facsimile [MOD]: +44 (0)1179 319634  
E-mail: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk

Reference: [REDACTED]

Date: 08 October 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 02 October 2013 requesting the following information:

*"I think it would be necessary for my funding bid to quote the number of personal experiencing hearing loss where this is not the principal cause of discharge – this will give a much more accurate picture of the support needed."*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below.

Defence Statistics has provided information on the number of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel medically discharged with a principal condition of hearing loss by Service during the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2013. Also provided are the number of UK Regular Armed Forces personnel medically discharged with a contributory (but not principal) cause of hearing loss.

Medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces involve a series of processes, at times complex, which differ in each Service to meet their specific employment requirements. Due to these differences between the three Services, comparisons between the single Service statistics are judged to be invalid. Therefore, the figures in this answer are presented separately for each Service.

**Table 1** provides the number of UK regular Naval Service, Army and RAF Service personnel medically discharged with a principle condition of hearing loss and medical discharges where hearing loss was a contributing factor by financial year for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2013.

**Table 1: UK Regular Armed Forces Personnel medically discharged with a principal or contributory condition of hearing loss, 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2013, by Service and Financial Year, Numbers**

	All	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
<b>Naval Service<sup>1</sup></b>						
Principal condition of hearing loss	70	~	7	~	30	23
Contributory condition of hearing loss	~	0	0	0	~	~
<b>Army</b>						
Principal condition of hearing loss	231	18	17	34	63	99
Contributory condition of hearing loss	9	~	0	~	~	~
<b>RAF</b>						
Principal condition of hearing loss	18	~	~	~	~	9
Contributory condition of hearing loss	0	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>1</sup> - Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

"~" represents a number less than 5 or the next smallest number where there is only one cell in a row or column that is less than five.

## Background notes

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces as an Official Statistic publication. In accordance with the Code of Practice for the release of National/Official Statistics we are unable to provide the data for 2013/14 prior to the next statistical release, due in July 2014, as set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act, 2007. The latest report can be found at: [www.dasa.mod.uk](http://www.dasa.mod.uk).

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the Armed Forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the Armed Forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

The information on cases was sourced from electronic personnel records and manually entered paper documents from medical boards. The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting is a secondary function.

Although Medical Boards recommend medical discharges they do not attribute the principal disability leading to the board to Service. A Medical Board could take place many months or even years after an event or injury and it is not clinically possible in some cases to link an earlier injury to a later problem which may lead to a discharge. Decisions on attributability to Service are made by the Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency.

Figures for hearing loss have been compiled using the International Classification of Diseases & Related Health Problems version 10 (ICD 10) cause codes H833 (noise-induced hearing loss), H900 - H908 (Conductive and sensorineural hearing loss) and H910 - H919 (Other hearing loss).

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering Annual Medical Discharges in the UK Regular Armed Forces and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing [DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk)

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Deputy Chief Information Officer, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be

made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

I hope you find this information useful

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)